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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: MUBARAK'S STATEMENTS ON SHIITES

Block Quotes

-- Al-Qabas, a daily political newspaper published an Op-Ed on April 10, 2006 titled "Not only the Shiites." by Abdul Latif Al-Daij, a columnist, in which he wrote: "I think what the Egyptian president meant is that there is a religious tide sweeping across the region. This tide places the religious and sectarian loyalties before national loyalty. This is a reality experienced by the Sunnis just as much as the Shiites. We, as does Egypt, have many who are ready to fight alongside the Taliban and under Bin Ladin's command and they outnumber those who would be willing to fight under the national flag under the command of an officer or a president."

-- Under the headline "letter to President Mubarak," Al-Qabas opening on April 10, 2006 read: "A clarification of the Egyptian president's statements is needed since it was the Iraqi Shiites who bore the brunt of the Iran-Iraq war and defended their country and their Arab identity. If there is a minority who look to foreign influences, then that is not grounds for generalization. We in GCC countries, and particularly Kuwait, are especially concerned with clarification of these statements as we enjoy an exemplary national unity."

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam, a daily political newspaper published an Op-Ed on April 12, 2006 titled "Shiite loyalty, to whom?" by Salah Al-Fadly, in which he wrote: "Mubarak's statements may have been a message to the Americans that Egypt supports America in its suspicion of the Iraqi Shiites' relations with Iran. These statements may have also been a deliberate expression of the Arabs' suspicions and exaggerated sensitivities towards any relations between Iraqi Shiites and Iranian Shiites out of fearing the formation of a strong Shiite power that would threaten neighbouring Arab societies in which Shiites are a minority."

-- Under the headline "Shiite and Sunni loyalties in an era of recruitment," Al-Anbaa published an article written by Faisal Abdul Aziz Al-Zamel on April 12, 2006: "Divisions along political, sectarian, and ethnic lines under the premise of generalization is what American policy in the region has come to. In Iraq the Americans divided the population into sectarian categories. The Sunnis are supposed to be followers of Saddam and the Shiites followers of Iran. This is a catastrophic way of looking at Iraq and is completely unjust to both Sunnis and Shiites."

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